

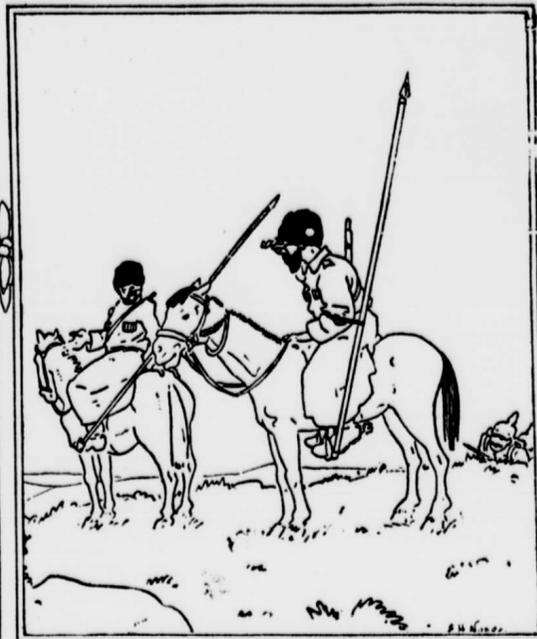
# THE TERROR INSPIRING, CHILDLIKE COSSACKS



"The Cossacks are coming! Consternation in an East Prussian village.



"The Cossacks are here! Indignation of Prussian villagers at being pushed back to clear their own streets. The Cossacks have big mouths, and shoot up a town like cowboys.



Cossacks of the Don—Their horses are trained to bite in battle.

## Their Reputation for Cruelty and Pillaging Causing Panic in Large Part of Central Europe

"The Cossacks fear us," says the valet of the convalescent Hungarian officer at Lausanne, Switzerland. "They gallop up and yell like devils, but as soon as they get near they turn and flee."

Switzerland is quietly receiving convalescent wounded officers of both sides, who go there as civilians for a month's recuperation before returning to the front again. One sees and hears a lot.

The wounded officer smiles at the remark about Cossacks. He has had to do with Cossacks in Galicia where the Hungarian cavalry did prodigious, but was mown down. Entire regiments disappeared.

"The truth is that the Cossacks launch themselves against the enemy's lines yelling, and at a certain distance they stop short, jump to the ground with astonishing facility, take shelter behind their horses, fire, leap into the saddle again and gallop away. This is when they are not trying to break the enemy's lines. But when they charge for good it is another story.

"A passing whirlwind!" says the Hungarian officer and gentleman, he honors an enemy—a tempest bristling with lances, a stall of the Lord! When they come singing hymns, beware! A brother falls? No matter. Onward! A rain of bullets mows down dozens? No importance. Onward!

"They come in a triangle, the summit pointed at you. A greenish mass far off enlarging rapidly. They curve over their horses, graided to them. Men and beasts in one rhythm whirl on! The horses are small, lean of queer button-tint and are shod only on the forefeet. Their steps, short and rapid, therefore do not sound like a common gallop, but crack with a noise of hail. When they sing, Release, poor Christian captives! I would rather meet 'savy cavalry!'"

The Cossack's distinguishing arm is a long lance fixed to the right foot, which by acquired momentum becomes redoubtable. When near the enemy they open like a fan and smash in. Yells of men and neighs of horses—horses which in joy of battle bite off ears and noses, fingers, bits of arms in

the melee. They are taught to bite in battle.

"And it sometimes happens," my Hungarian tells me—he seems an admirer of the Cossacks and I tell it to you as he told it to me—"that the mere threat of a Cossack charge sends Austrian troops retreating or intrenching, because it is known that under equal conditions the Cossack charge is almost irresistible.

"Time and again we have captured their crazy horses. It served nothing. They will not take a step unless they hear the well known voice commanding. The Cossacks have trained them to the fidelity of dogs."

The war despatches are already full of Cossack raids.

At Petrokoff, occupied by Germans, a regiment of Zobelkajle Cossacks dashed in and shot up the town like cowboys. With the yells of demons they galloped down the wide main street, sabring soon German infantrymen taken off their guard and disappearing.

From Vienna come details of the panic in which the entire population of Sziget, in Hungary, fled. Some 2,500 of the residents arrived in Budapest in a destitute state; every man, woman and child of them had actually met the Cossacks, and not one had been robbed or hurt! It is a curious story.

The last train left Maramaros, Sziget at 8 P. M. leaving several thousand citizens behind. At 7 o'clock the next morning the first Cossack squire arrived before Maramaros. The Burzomaster, a priest, a rabbi and forty citizens went out to meet them and beg that the town and its remnant of inhabitants be spared.

The commandant of the Cossacks promised them politely that this should be done. And with this they made their entry, galloping through the streets, singing hymns, yelling and shooting into the air to show their joy. "It was this racket that provoked the panic," says the telegram, "and caused the refugees to flee afoot, destitute, leaving all behind them."

Time will tell whether the Cossacks merit the terrible reputation which is causing a panic in a large part of central Europe.

Prophecy and sayings have much to

do with it. "The Cossacks will water their horses in the Rhine and Elbe," runs the prediction of Mayence. "The Cossacks will bed their horses in the church at Taggia," affirms the fourteenth verse of Maria Columba.

Yes, but—

In Lausanne there is a Russian lady who has just brought her son through from Odessa with enormous difficulty—blinded in both eyes by an Austrian shell the young man will never fight again. They tell how twenty-five Cossacks, at Tomashoff, took 282 Austrian soldiers prisoners. Advancing at twilight along the edge of a forest bordering the Austrian lines they hid till dark; then dividing into three little squadrons they launched on the enemy with customary yells and deafening fire.

"The Austrians supposed themselves attacked by three considerable masses," says the Russian lady. "Falling on their knees they held their arms in the air crying, 'Your God is ours! Grace! We surrender!'"

"Madame," I asked, "do you really think they said that?"

"Surely," was her answer, "it is an appeal which never fails with any Cossack; just cry out, 'Your God is ours!' The Austrians learn it by heart."

I tell you, even here in Switzerland there is a curious fear of Cossacks—never Russian soldiers, always Cossacks. I should add that it is held by women only (in Switzerland), worthy housewives who dream of pillage, arson and being tied to a horse's tail.

They fear for their store closets full of canned goods against famine (they fear famine), and they seek good spots in the backyard where to bury the silver. Only the Germans, they argue, that people of culture, can preserve Switzerland—small neutral land—from Cossack raids, sack, arson and annexation.

How did the Cossacks get this bad name? In Eastern Prussia they have burned farmhouses and barns, bombed open towns like Neldenburg and Ortelburg (only the Cossacks proper have no artillery), and even shot certain recalcitrant inhabitants. On the other hand, according to a Koenigsberg newspaper which has fallen into my possession, the Russians after occupying Tilsit forgot to destroy that city. During three weeks of occupation they put off sacking it and looting it and burning it and plundering it and devastating it from day to day. And when they were finally forced to retreat they did not even remember to shoot the

hostages which they had taken! "They had not time!" says the German paper. "Bless their procrastination!" says my friend Valentin. "Men who put on from day to day committing a crime prove that they still have some sentiment of humanity. Let us hope that good examples in the cultured West may finally their rude Slav, Tatar and Mongolian honesty!"

"I know," he says, "the Slav peril! Europe knows it. The Slav peril was all over Europe exactly a hundred years ago. It came, as the faithful ally of the Germans, to aid in freeing Europe from military despotism. When the work was done the Slav peril went quietly back home—and stayed there!"

As a historical fact, when the Allies overran France the Russians in general, and the Cossacks in particular, wrought the least havoc. In spite of their terrifying aspect, great fur hats and wild and windy beards, they proved to be overgrown children. A very aged Alsatian lady, who has taken refuge at Basel (the Germans burned her farm), and who has an excellent memory, tells Cossack stories which as a girl she heard from her own grandmother.

"When the Cossacks traversed Alsace in 1814," she said, "they did us no great harm, because they were not particular to give them quantities of loot, which they rubbed on their bread. When the loot was gone our tallow candles went the same way. After eating their fill they would play with our children, who were not at all afraid of those hairy men. They were not like the Kaiserlich. What wicked devils those Austrians, cruel and persecuting the malds!"

And the grandmother would go on, for the twentieth time, with the story of their farm wench, a strapping girl, who, pursued too closely by an Austrian soldier, threw him on his back, planted her knees on his chest and with her two thumbs in his mouth tore it open from ear to ear. After which she was obliged to hide during three weeks in an empty tin in the cellar until the departure of the Allies!

Love of children seems to be a characteristic Cossack trait. In his autobiography which appeared only a few months ago and is the favorite reading of my convalescent friend, Count Geza Zichy gives an amusing example. At the moment when he was born, July 23, 1849, his father, a Colonel of Hussars commanded the revolutionary troops from that region is called the Cossacks

## Majority Are Deeply Religious and Sing Hymns While Charging Enemy --Not Living Up to Bad Name

of the Amur and of Zobelkajle. Their infantry and artillery mix with the mass of Russians. Only their cavalry are called Cossacks.

Well, among the Zobelkajles there are entire regiments of Buriats, who are Buddhists, spiritually governed by the priests called lamas, under the dala-lama of Tibet (the same as the old friend of Kipling's "Kim").

Of course there are exceptions. The vast mass of Cossacks are devout orthodox Christians, who listen with particular docility to the monks of Troitzko-Serguief, most famous monastery of Russia. Recently the monks sent a printed letter to their friends the Cossacks, and we hear by telegraph that the lamas impose its injunctions equally upon the Buriat conscience.

It might be entitled "Recommendations on Going to War." I quote three paragraphs:

"Insult no one; calumniate no one; harm not the enemy who flees or the enemy who lies in his blood.

"Do not grieve your guardian angel (who fights with you) by doing useless harm.

"Do not touch the goods of others. What, soil your conscience by plunder and one minute afterward, perhaps, hold your dead body in the trench, where gold and valuables will not serve you? Before God, mountains of gold could not buy you back."

"Of course, they are great children.

"The monks of St. Sergius recommend them not to risk smelling strange foods, drinks and medicines.

"Maladies come, because one does not listen to the regimental doctors when one is in foreign lands."

And, finally:

"Brothers, keep your consciences. Keep pure. And God protect you!"

**Boom for Geography**

SCHOOL TEACHERS report a boom in geography interest, all occasioned by the European war. When the schools reopened the teachers of grades where foreign map study was to be taken up were surprised to see the eagerness of the pupils to handle the topic. It took but a short time to learn

## Changing the Makeup of Europe---How the Barber Would Render Them a la American



George V., King of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, &c.    Nicholas II., Emperor of Russia.    Raymond Poincare, President of France.    Albert I., King of the Belgians.    William II., German Emperor and King of Prussia.    Francis Joseph I., Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary.